

IS BRUNO SAMMARTINO SACRIFICING  
HIS SON ON THE ALTAR OF HATRED?

April 1983

VICTORY  
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# THE Wrestler

**DUSTY RHODES—ERNIE LADD'S  
ONLY ROADBLOCK TO THE FANS**

*The Sensational  
Tiger Mask:*



**WRESTLING  
AT THE SPEED  
OF LIGHT!**

**Grand Wizard's  
Open Letter To  
THE WRESTLER:  
"YOUR LIES  
MUST STOP!"**

*Dory Funk Jr.  
Learns . . .*  
**TOO MUCH  
SUGAR IS  
BAD FOR  
HIS HEALTH**





By BILL APTER

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

**T**HE AMERICAN WRESTLING FEDERATION is contemplating stripping Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell of the association's tag team title. The duo has been unable to defend the belts due to a serious injury suffered by Gagne during an



unscheduled melee with Crusher Blackwell.

vacant."

"I am sorry, but we cannot let the tag team belts remain inactive, even for a short period of time," AWA President Stanley Blackburn told us by telephone from his Amarillo, Texas, base. "If they do not defend the belts within the next few weeks, I will be forced to declare the title

Blackburn is reportedly under pressure from the number one contenders, Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie and Crusher Blackwell, who feel they should be named the new champions. "The inactivity of Gagne and Brunzell is costing us a lot of money," said Kaissie. "There is a legal precedent for allowing the top challengers to assume a vacant title, but Blackburn must make the first move and declare the title vacant."

As you may recall, Barry Windham substituted for Southern champion Dusty Rhodes against Kevin Sullivan when Dusty was injured in a sneak-attack just minutes before his scheduled title defense. Windham lost the title Dusty entrusted to him when Sullivan received aid from Jake Roberts. Sullivan, who already holds the Florida belt, literally gave the Southern belt to Roberts in gratitude for his assistance. But NWA President Bob Geigel vetoed Sullivan's move and ordered the title vacated. So the belt was put up for grabs in a tournament in Sarasota, Florida. In the final

round of the tourney, Windham defeated Greg Valentine to win the title! Well done, Barry!

Johnny Rich, cousin of Tommy Rich, will be receiving a shot at



Is young Johnny Rich ready to challenge Nick Bockwinkel for the AWA title? Several experts, including Johnny's cousin Tommy, are not quite sure.

AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel in Houston, Texas. "I am honored," Rich says. "I believe I can beat Bockwinkel and serve as the kind of champion AWA fans can be proud of." But as honored as he feels, many observers, including Tommy Rich, wonder if Johnny is really ready for such a match at this stage of his career... Mid-Atlantic wrestling officials have hired

(Continued on page 52)



# CORRESPONDENTS Reports

**PHILADELPHIA—Correspondent:** Kevin Jordan—WWF champion Bob Backlund defended his belt before 26,000 fans against Playboy Buddy Rose in a special Lumberjack Match. Rose was the first to try to escape from the ring, but was thrown back in by the wrestlers standing guard outside. In the later going, Rose tried to pin Backlund with a reverse backslide, but the champ kicked out before the three-count.



Playboy Buddy Rose put up a spirited effort but was unsuccessful in defeating WWF champion Bob Backlund in a Lumberjack Match.

Backlund then clamped on his patented chicken wing. Rose tried to get to the ropes to break the hold, but the pain was too much for him. The referee called for the bell and Backlund was once again victorious.

In other bouts: Jimmy Snuka and Buddy Rogers defeated Ray Stevens and Captain Lou Albano . . . Tiger Mask beat Eddie Gilbert . . . Superstar Billy Graham beat

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

Chief Jay Strongbow . . . Pedro Morales and Salvatore Bellomo defeated Mr. Saito and Ricki Cho-Chu . . . Tony Garea beat Swede Hanson . . . Jules Strongbow beat Baron Scicluna.

**LAS VEGAS—Correspondent:** Jay Elliot Jr.—Tito Santana and his new tag team partner, Baron Von Raschke, faced Bob Duncum and Ken Patera in a one fall/one hour bout. Santana almost pinned Patera with a flying bodypress at the start after a series of shoulder-blocks, but Patera kicked out in time. After a long-fought, grueling war, in which much of the action took place outside the ring, Patera pinned Santana with help from the bottom ring rope.

In other matches: Jim Brunzell beat Crusher Blackwell via disqualification . . . Rick Martel and Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie fought to a 20-minute draw . . . The Lone Eagle and Tiny Tom beat Little Tokyo and Billy the Kid.

**HAMPTON, VA—Correspondent:** James Pickett—Jack Brisco defended his newly won Mid-Atlantic title against Roddy Piper. The pace was quick from the onset.



Jack Brisco retained his Mid-Atlantic belt when challenger Roddy Piper was disqualified for receiving outside help from Sir Oliver Humperdink. Humperdink is reportedly very interested in signing Piper to a contract.

with the two trading armdrags and headlocks, but neither gaining a significant advantage. Sir Oliver Humperdink mysteriously appeared at ringside to encourage Piper to revert to brawling tactics. He wouldn't. Piper whipped Brisco into the ropes and Humperdink tripped Jack from outside the ring, resulting in Piper's disqualification. Both wrestlers were furious at Humperdink's interference and attacked the villainous manager.

In other matches: Jimmy Valiant edged Greg Valentine . . . Sgt. Slaughter and Don Kernodle beat Jerry Brisco and Sweet Brown Sugar . . . Leroy Brown beat Mike Rotondo . . . Jos LeDuc defeated Johnny Weaver.

**MARSHALL, TX—Correspondent:** Dianne Bivins—The NWA heavyweight championship was on the line as Ric Flair took on the challenge of David Von Erich. The bout was a wild brawl, with

(Continued on page 54)



# YOU ASKED US

**Here's the monthly feature which YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR question! Only the best questions will be answered—so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to: YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, PO BOX 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571. Questions will be answered only in this column and at our discretion!**

**Q:** "My question is for Jimmy Snuka. I saw Jimmy on television when he took two piledrivers from Ray Stevens, and I'm happy to see that he is back now. But I would like to know if Jimmy feels he is once again at his best, both mentally and physically."—Diana Henderson, Bronx, NY

**A:** "Let me tell you something, Diana," responds The Superfly, "not only am I in the best shape of my life physically, I am in better mental condition than I've ever been. I am so prepared mentally to destroy Albano, to destroy Blassie, and to destroy Ray Stevens. I will get even someday for what they did to me, and I won't rest until I do."

\*\*\*

**Q:** "Jerry Lawler, you are a smart man. You've gotten rid of people like Jos LeDuc, Kamala, and plenty of the wrestlers in Jimmy Hart's First Family, such as Killer Karl Krupp, Kevin Sullivan,



After Jimmy Snuka was brutally assaulted by Ray Stevens and Captain Lou Albano, his career seemed to be in severe jeopardy. But with incredible recuperative powers and matching determination, The Superfly is 100 percent again, both physically and mentally.

and Paul Ellering. You even put Hart out of action for a while, but I can't figure out why you don't just trick him into signing for a Cage Match and end it right there."—Doug Holmes, Louisville, KY

**A:** Jerry Lawler replies: "You know, Hart is not a stupid

man. Crazy, perhaps, but certainly not stupid. I might be able to trick him into a Cage Match, but it wouldn't be easy. Anyway, I look at a Cage Match as the last resort in a feud. I'm not ready to resort to that . . . yet."

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**Q:** "I have a question for Don Muraco. Now that you are wrestling in the WWF, I was wondering why you haven't used your pet maneuver, the Asiatic spike. While wrestling in Florida, you used this devastating move very often. Has the spike been outlawed in the WWF?"—Mark Vincent Miranda, Staten Island, NY

**A:** "First of all, it's 'Magnificent Muraco,' not 'Don Muraco,'"

replied Muraco. "And, yes, the spike has been outlawed in the WWF. But my esteemed manager, Captain Lou Albano, is working on the case, he's got lawyers working on the case, and we hope to get the spike back in action (Continued on page 56)



Every issue, this magazine praises the noteworthy and damns those who violate the spirit of wrestling's dignity. The praiseworthy are given a "thumbs up," the disgraceful are marked with "thumbs down." Here is this month's roll of honor and shame.

# Thumbs Up



**THUMBS DOWN** to Bob Backlund: His continuing campaign of brutality against Superstar Billy Graham is a disgrace to the WWF belt he wears around his waist. Backlund ought to understand that the kind of relentless brutality he is engaging in is detrimental to his title. Backlund's reputation should not be tainted by his personal feelings toward one particular man.

**THUMBS UP** to Wahoo McDaniel: Although he lost his U.S. title to Greg Valentine, Wahoo McDaniel has not lost his determination and drive for excellence. The fact that McDaniel remains in such a positive frame of mind should stand as an inspiration to professional wrestlers and wrestling fans alike.



**THUMBS DOWN** to Buzz Sawyer: It seems that Sawyer's hatred for Tommy "Wildfire" Rich is endless. No matter where Rich goes, no matter how far Tommy travels, "Mad Dog" Buzz Sawyer is there to wreak havoc. The situation between Sawyer and Rich has long passed the point of being merely a feud. Sawyer's actions jeopardize the careers of both men.

**THUMBS UP** to Steve Keirn: Steve has formed a tag team with Stanley Lane and has set his sights on the WWA tag team champions New York Dolls, Troy Graham and Rick McGraw. Managed by Jimmy Hart. The New York Dolls are one of the most arrogant teams on the wrestling scene today, and we support Keirn and Lane in their efforts to teach them a lesson in sportsmanship.



**THUMBS DOWN** to Ted DiBiase: Many fans have been coming out in support of DiBiase, despite his current wishes to embrace the ways of the rulebreaker. Nevertheless, DiBiase has virtually spit in the faces of these fans, claiming he doesn't need their support at all. It's too bad DiBiase doesn't realize there are still some people in the world who care about him.

(Continued on page 58)

# Thumbs Down



# RAY

THE WRESTLER PANEL EXAMINES



## JIMMY VALIANT

Each month  
**THE WRESTLER'S** panel of experts  
will offer their candid opinions of one  
of wrestling's stars. Whether an up-and-coming  
youngster or an established superstar in his own right,  
our panel will always be frank and honest without fear of reprisal



*Jimmy Valiant's wrestling career has been marked by controversy since his debut in the early 1970s. Who are his allies? Who are his enemies? From year to year, the names change. But Valiant is still the same rugged, gutsy competitor, whose destiny in wrestling is disputed by the "X-Ray" panel of experts.*





### **BRUNO SAMMARTINO**

Jimmy knows what he's doing in a ring, you have to admit that. He's a scuffer from the old school. He reminds me of a gladiator. He gets in the ring, figures it's either him or me, and does the work accordingly. He doesn't ask for mercy or expect any. You have to respect his courage.

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*Bruno Sammartino is a former two-time WWF champion. He is known as wrestling's "Living Legend."*



### **VERNE GAGNE**

The one thing Jimmy's career lacks is stability. I have never seen a man change wrestling styles and partners so often. Until he settles down and sets his goals, I don't think he'll ever get as far as he should in this sport. Here is a man with all the talent in the world who is too mixed up to take advantage of it. Perhaps one day he will.

---

*Verne Gagne held the AWA title a record 11 times. He is considered one of the greatest scientific wrestlers in history.*



### **GENE KINISKI**

When it comes to being a man's wrestler, there are few who fit the bill as well as Jimmy Valiant. He's a brawler with brains, as dangerous as a cobra. The stuffed-shirt wrestlers don't like him, but they could never understand what it takes to really wrestle. Jimmy knows sport is war.

---

*Gene Kiniski is a rugged Canadian who was NWA champion during the late 1960s.*



### **JOHNNY VALENTINE**

I've seen Valiant for years and have never been impressed. The most credit I ever gave him was when I thought he was wasting his talent. Now I know better. He's a man without a great deal of athletic ability. It's a scandal that he manages to be successful. The more I see him, the angrier I get.

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*Johnny Valentine is a former U.S. champion and world tag team titleholder who was a top contender for the NWA, AWA, and WWF belts during his career.*



### **LOU THESZ**

I think Valiant makes people choose sides, and they get emotions all confused when they think about him. To say he's not a fine athlete is absurd, as is trying to deny he's a dangerous brawler. Jimmy wouldn't want it any other way. As long as he can keep people off-balance, never really understanding him, then he's happy. He's always just a little bit better than his enemies think.

---

*Lou Thesz held the NWA championship six times during his fabulous 50-year career. Some consider him the greatest all-around wrestler ever.*



### **EDDIE GRAHAM**

Over the past year or so, I have come to admire this man more than any other in the sport. When Sir Oliver Humperdink put Ivan Koloff in the ring against him night after night, Valiant never complained. He just went about his business and eventually wore Koloff down. The same thing happened when Humperdink turned Jos LeDuc loose on him.

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*Eddie Graham is a former world tag team champion and top contender for the NWA title.*



# Q & A

Each month, **THE WRESTLER** will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost on the fans' minds



Studd and Jimmy Snuka engaged in a heated feud back in 1979, and it appears likely that the feud will resume. A victory over Snuka would virtually assure Big John a shot at Bob Backlund's WWF title.

**Q:** You have offered an ever increasing sum of money to any man or woman who can bodyslam you. Every time someone fails, another \$500 is added to the prize. That's a pretty risky way of getting attention.

**A:** No risk at all. Nobody can bodyslam me. It just can't happen.

**Q:** Doesn't this challenge distract your attention from your stated goal of winning the WWF belt?

**A:** I could be in the middle of a hurricane, standing on a hammock dangling over a gorge, and looking down on hungry alligators, and I still could concentrate on beating Backlund. It's just not that hard.

**Q:** No one has done it for years.

**A:** They haven't been defeated by Backlund, they've been defeated by the rules. Everyone knows he has the officials in his back pocket, doing everything they can to protect him. Well, Freddie has worked out a plan to make sure the officials can't interfere.

**Q:** Let me guess. It's a secret plan that will shock everyone when it's unfolded. Haven't we heard that before? No, let me keep





## JOHN STUDD

**S**LOWLY BUT SURELY, John Studd has grown in reputation and stature. Today, he is one of the most feared men in the sport. After terrorizing the Florida area for months, he has now come north to threaten Bob Backlund's WWF championship. Managed by Fred Blassie, he is expected to be one of Backlund's greatest challenges. To find out about the man and his assault on the WWF, we arranged this interview.



Studd established his own "takeout" service when he wrestled in Florida. Studd would carry a stretcher to the ring and frequently his opponent had to be taken out on it.

going. Yours must be a special secret plan.

**A:** The person who tried to make fun of me wound up in the hospital sipping his meals through a straw.

**Q:** Look, we've been sitting through five years of the secret plans by hundreds of wrestlers—and Backlund remains champion. Isn't it about time you guys gave Backlund his due?

**A:** I'm ready to give him his due!

**Q:** Now we're into the threats. Why is it so hard for you guys to admit Backlund must have something?

**A:** You reporters love Backlund, don't you? He's everything you want in a champion. Never does anything wrong, upholds the "honor" of wrestling, and smiles at widows and orphans. Heroes like him fill arenas, sell magazines—and make me sick. You guys put him so high up that the real professionals, the guys in the trenches, have to keep pulling him down to reality. Sure, he has something. It doesn't really have anything to do with wrestling, but that doesn't

*(Continued on page 62)*



# INTRODUCING KING KONG BUNDY



**I**T WAS THE kind of bar you visit for serious carousing. Nobody knows your name and that's the way everybody likes it. At about three in the morning, the guys who need a fight to make the night complete wander outside. About half an hour later, without even bothering to look, someone calls for an ambulance. You can always use an ambulance in these places.

One night, Gary Hart and a couple of his wrestlers were in the mood to behave in an unacceptable manner. After terrorizing a couple of other place, they wandered into this bar. They were a bit astonished to notice the customers weren't quaking in their boots at their appearance. Then they saw the bouncer.

He was huge, powerfully built with muscles rippling over his gargantuan frame. It gave Hart and cohorts pause, but it didn't scare them. After all, mayhem was their profession, and by comparison a bouncer is bush league.

So they continued behaving in a manner unfit for civilized company. Almost immediately, they found themselves chucked out on the streets. This got them angry.

Loudly, they marched back into the bar. Again, they found themselves unceremoniously shown the door. This got them angrier.

They strode into the place ready for hell and high water. They got what they came for. And again, they found themselves dumped on their duffs.

This time, they recognized



The newest addition to Gary Hart's army may prove to be the most menacing yet. He's big, strong, and brutal. With the evil mind of Hart behind him, Bundy threatens to destroy anyone who gets in his way



something important had happened. One man, using only his brawn and guts, had sent them running for cover. With a little training, he could be one of the most dangerous men in wrestling.

Waving a white handkerchief, Hart went in alone. He asked to talk to the bouncer. "Talk!" was the bouncer's abrupt reply.

Hart identified himself as one of the most successful wrestling managers in the world. He explained that he could turn the bouncer into a wrestling star. It also meant the bouncer could earn in a night what he currently made in a month. King Kong (yes, he was even called "King Kong" before he was a wrestler) Bundy found it an offer he couldn't refuse.

So his training began in earnest. He soon found out being strong and mean wasn't everything. He had to learn strategies, maneuvers, study his opponents, and take orders. That was the hardest part



King Kong Bundy drives his massive arms into the back of the neck of his chief rival, Alberto Madril (top left). Few wrestlers, Madril included, can match this rising star in a test of strength (above).

of all. He didn't like it, but he did it.

Then he was ready. His first match was against Bill White. It was short and ugly. In less than a minute, White lay in agony on the canvas, several ribs broken. As White screamed in agony, Bundy and Hart rejoiced.

The victories and shattered bodies kept coming. Every so often, Bundy would face a tough competitor and get a wrestling lesson. Those were dues he had to pay and he paid them.

His most ferocious matches have been against Alberto Madril. These two men instinctively hate

each other, as if they were born to be enemies. Everything Alberto cherishes, Bundy laughs at. The nobility of spirit Alberto prizes so dearly, Bundy has never cared about. Alberto was born to make the world a better place. Bundy wants to bring it down to his level.

Their bouts have been wars. The stakes are much more than a wrestling victory. They are battling for a way of life. As a spectator once said after a particularly brutal brawl, "When Bundy wins, we all lose."

King Kong Bundy is here. There's a good chance we may all lose. □



# SPOTLIGHTS

From time to time, *The Wrestler* will shine its spotlight on an outstanding wrestler, manager, or tag team. These are unforgettable highlights of the sport's greatest stars, compiled by the largest staff of editors and photographers in wrestling journalism

## GINO HERNANDEZ THE GORGEOUS TEXAS PLAYBOY

**"GORGEOUS GINO HERNANDEZ"** is the name of the Houston area's

most popular and handsome wrestler. He is a native of the Houston area and has been a favorite of people such as

Texaco, Best a, and the Radio.

But Gino is also a wrestler, and once he steps into that ring, he is as dangerous as they come. His dropkick is perhaps the most effective in the Texas area, and his scientific maneuvers confound even the most expert wrestlers who expect a man of his reputation to be strictly a brawler.

Gino wrestles in tag team competition along with Tully Blanchard, and together they have their eyes set on the Southeastern tag team championship belts now held by Rick Morton and Ken Lucas.

Yet Gino and Tully are able to split their energies; they are also engaged in a bitter feud with Mr. Mascaras and his brother Dos Caras. Hernandez, a Mexican American, has been quite vocal in his criticism of Mascaras and Caras' National Mexican heritage, and this has been the primary fuel for the feud.

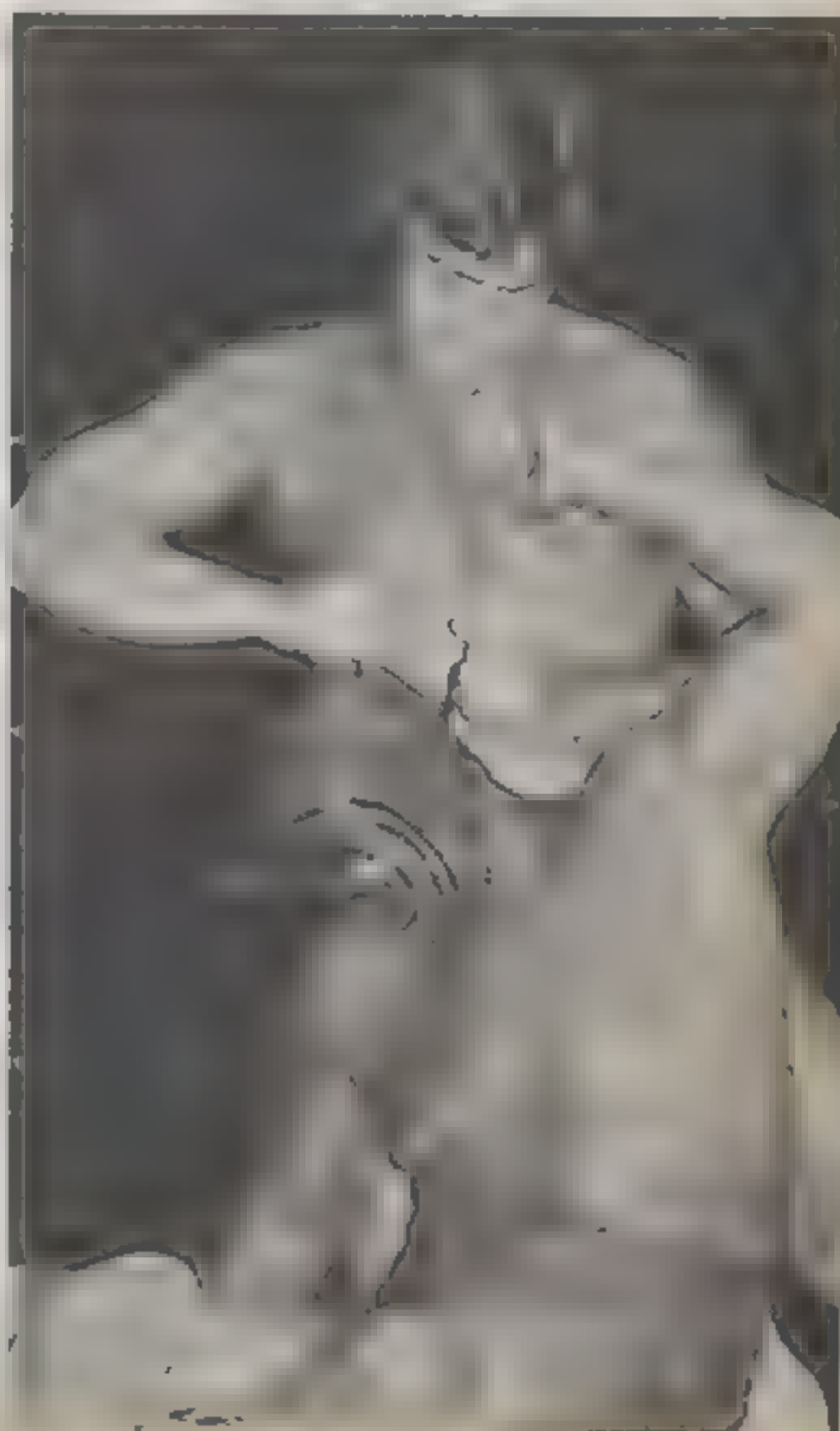
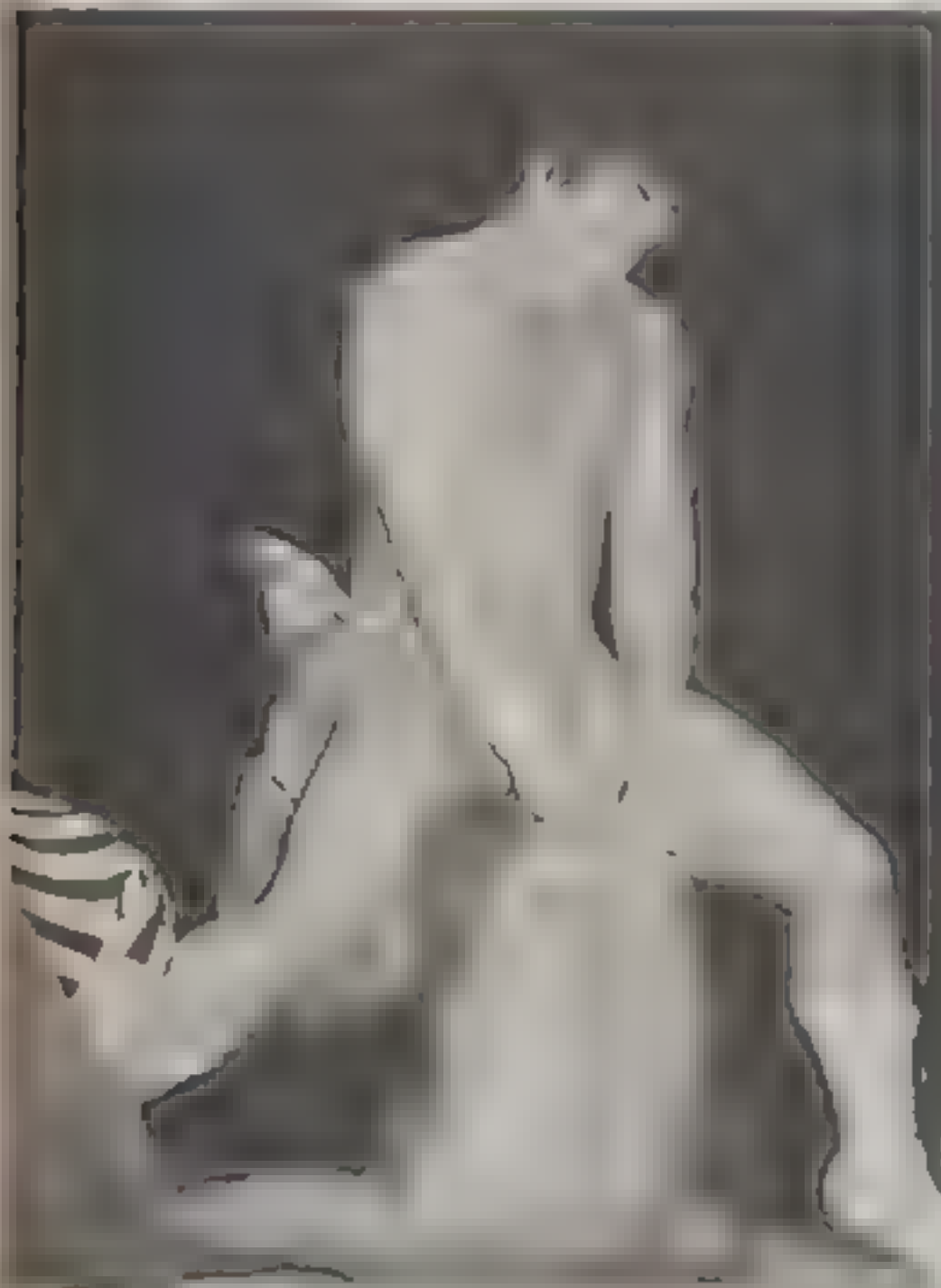
Love him or hate him, one has to admit that Gino Hernandez is a powerful force on the wrestling scene today. Recognizing that indisputable fact, *The Wrestler* presents this "Spotlight" on "Gorgeous" Gino Hernandez, Texas Playboy and wrestler extraordinaire. □







Above left: Hernandez receives a bouquet of flowers from Farrah Fawcett. Above right: Gino digs his knee into Tommy Rich's neck. Below The referee is the only one who doesn't notice Hernandez's illegal pin of Chavo Guerrero. Right: El Sicodelico, brother of Mil Mascaras and Dos Caras, is almost unmasked.





# The Sensational Tiger Mask

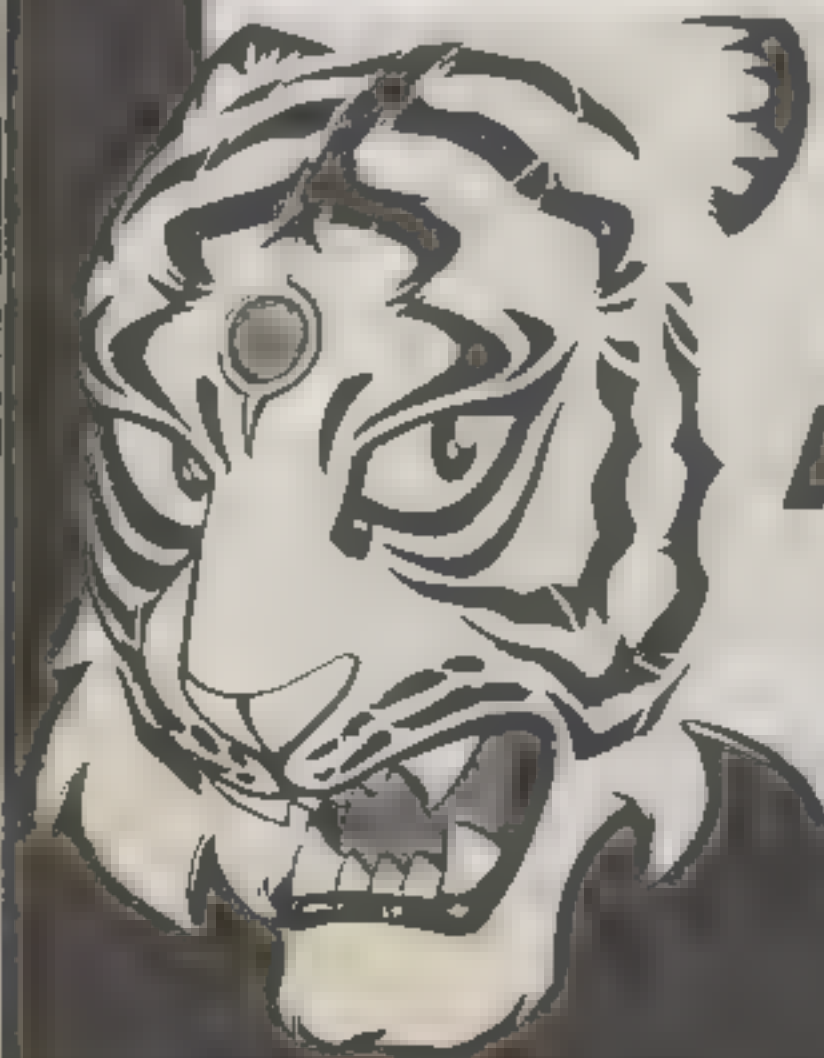


**H**E POSES REGALLY on the top rope, cape flowing behind him as if he were a superhero. Around his waist is a championship belt; on any given day he could be defending either the NWA junior heavyweight title or the WWF junior heavyweight title, for he holds both championships.

His mask is the most unusual in all of wrestling. gold with black accents, the top of the mask sports a pair of ears, while the area around the chin is decorated with a white mane. The area around the mouth is colored red with white teeth. If you squint your eyes at this mask, you might well see the head of a tiger.

All of this is quite appropriate, for the wrestler we describe happens to be the sensational Tiger Mask.

indeed, the superhero reference made above is hardly inappropriate. Tiger Mask, the wrestler, has been active only since his ring debut in Japan on April 23, 1981. But Tiger Mask, the comic strip character, has been in existence for several years, delighting Japanese



## WRESTLING AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT!





PHOTOS BY BILL APTER & CRAIG PETERS



readers with his high-flying wrestling exploits

In 1980, as the Tiger Mask comic strip was increasing in popularity, there was an individual who had gone through the rigorous training schools of New Japan Professional Wrestling, distinguishing himself there as an expert gymnast and a superb aerial artist

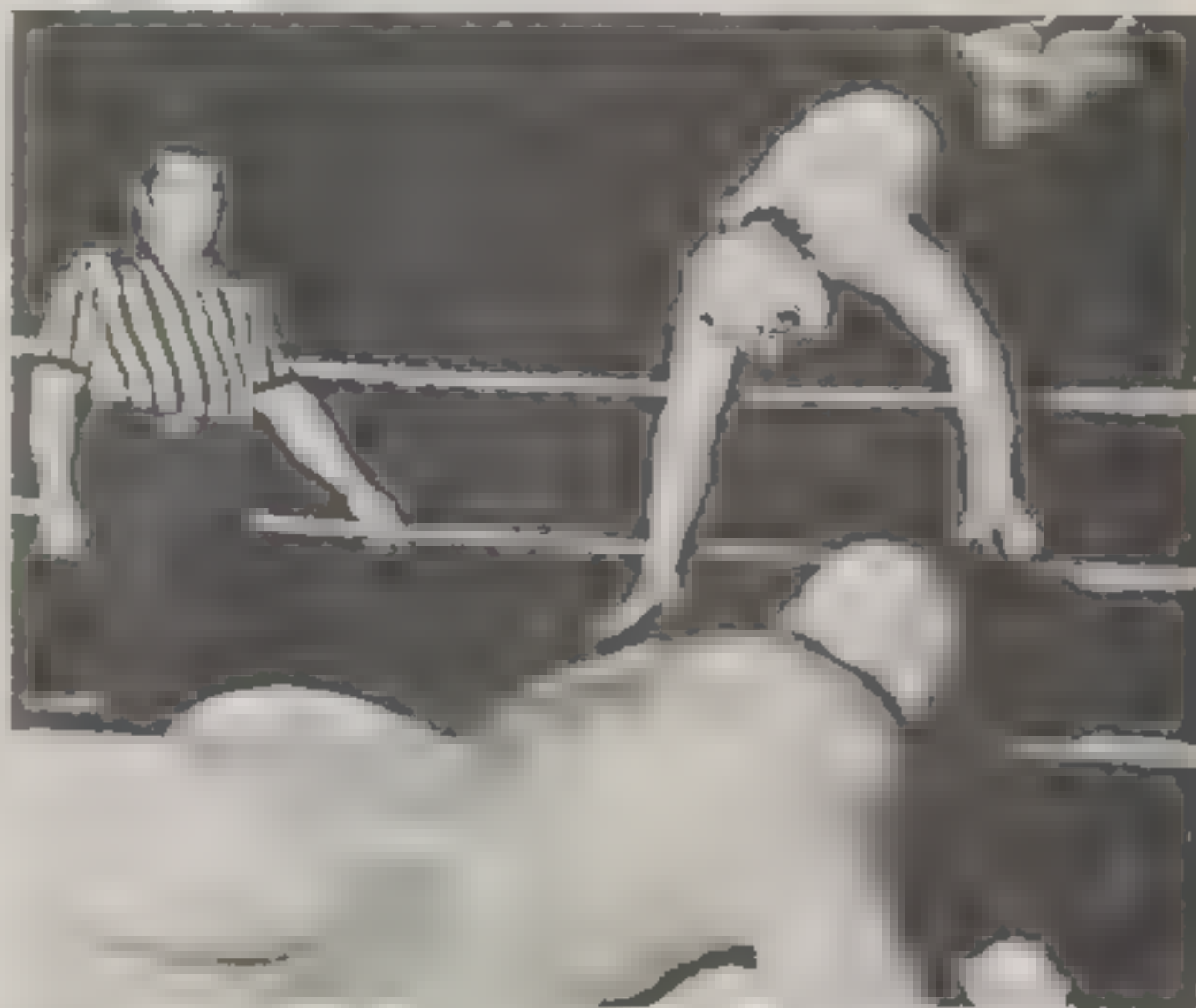
This man, who chooses to have his name withheld, wrestled without a mask in England and Japan. A close friend, who admired this wrestler's technique, noted that his flamboyant wrestling style coupled with his skills as a kick boxer (he was a professional kick boxer prior to his entrance into wrestling school) made him a dead ringer for Tiger Mask. "All you need," he told this wrestler, "is a mask and a cape and you could be Tiger Mask himself!"

The idea struck this wrestler as a good one, so preparations were made and Tiger Mask, the wrestler, made his debut in April 1981

It didn't take long for Tiger Mask to rack up an impressive rookie record. He won the world middleweight title in England,

and is the first man to hold both the NWA and WWF junior heavyweight titles

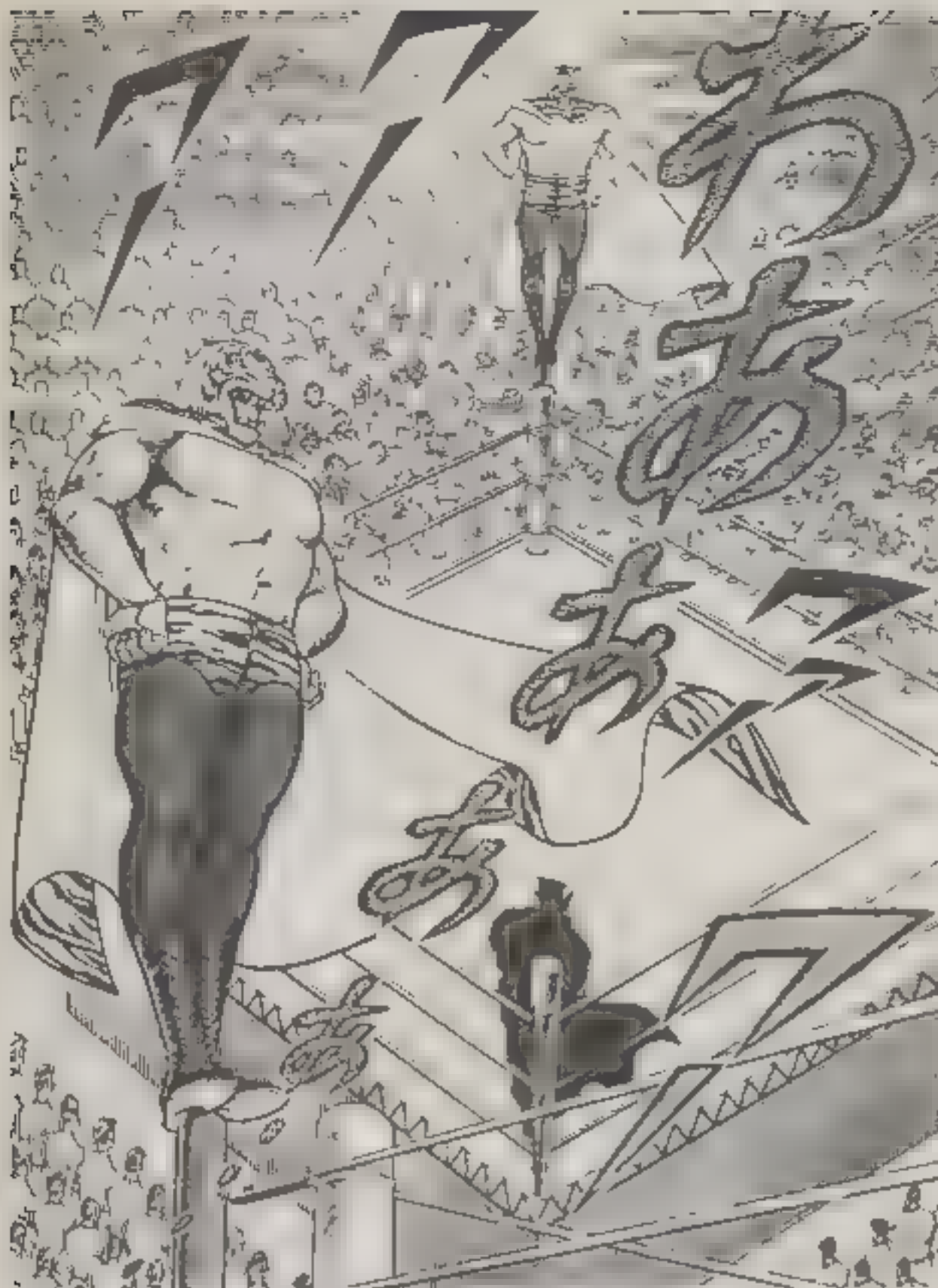
If you have been fortunate



The amazing Tiger Mask displays his high-flying skills during his Madison Square Garden match against Jose Estrada. Diving from the top rope, Tiger Mask hopes to pin Estrada while he is flat on the canvas (above). As Estrada rebounds off the ropes, Tiger Mask uses his shoulder to flip Estrada to the mat (below left). Taking to the air once again, Tiger Mask uses a legsmash directly at the neck of Estrada (below right). Tiger Mask, by the way, won this particular match.







In Japan, Tiger Mask is an extremely popular comic book character. Tiger Mask himself recently provided *The Wrestler* with several issues of the Tiger Mask comic examples of which appear above and on pages 30 and 31.

enough to see him wrestle in person, or at least on television you already are aware of the remarkable skills possessed by Tiger Mask. If you have yet to witness this incredible athlete here are a few examples of what he does.

- He whips his opponent into the cornerpost, stunning him momentarily. Then, flying at the man as if he were delivering a dropkick, Tiger Mask plants his feet on his opponent's chest, pushes off, and executes a perfect backflip. Appropriately catlike, Tiger Mask lands on his feet ready to continue the match

against his confused foe.

- He chases his opponent to the edge of the ring. Tiger Mask then charges to the opposite side, rebounds off the ropes, and levels a full speed attack on his man. If his opponent is wise enough to leave the ring, Tiger Mask will continue on his course, grabbing the ropes and swinging out of the ring and back in again, much in the way a gymnast on a pommel horse would perform perfect swinging circles. Tiger Mask's opponent is left confused and embarrassed and the masked man himself is already in the ring, waiting for

the match to continue.

- Should his opponent retreat to the safety of the ringside seats, Tiger Mask will often catapult off the ropes, bounce on the canvas in the center of the ring, and dive over the top rope in a variation of the flying bodypress. Needless to say, Tiger Mask usually finishes off his opponent at this point.

There are so many other holds and maneuvers in Tiger Mask's repertoire. Many of them are quite subtle, enabling him to escape virtually any wrestling hold. Others are, as the examples mentioned above, flamboyant and exciting. Still others utilize Tiger Mask's kick boxing background, stunning his opponent with lightning-fast spins and reverse kicks.

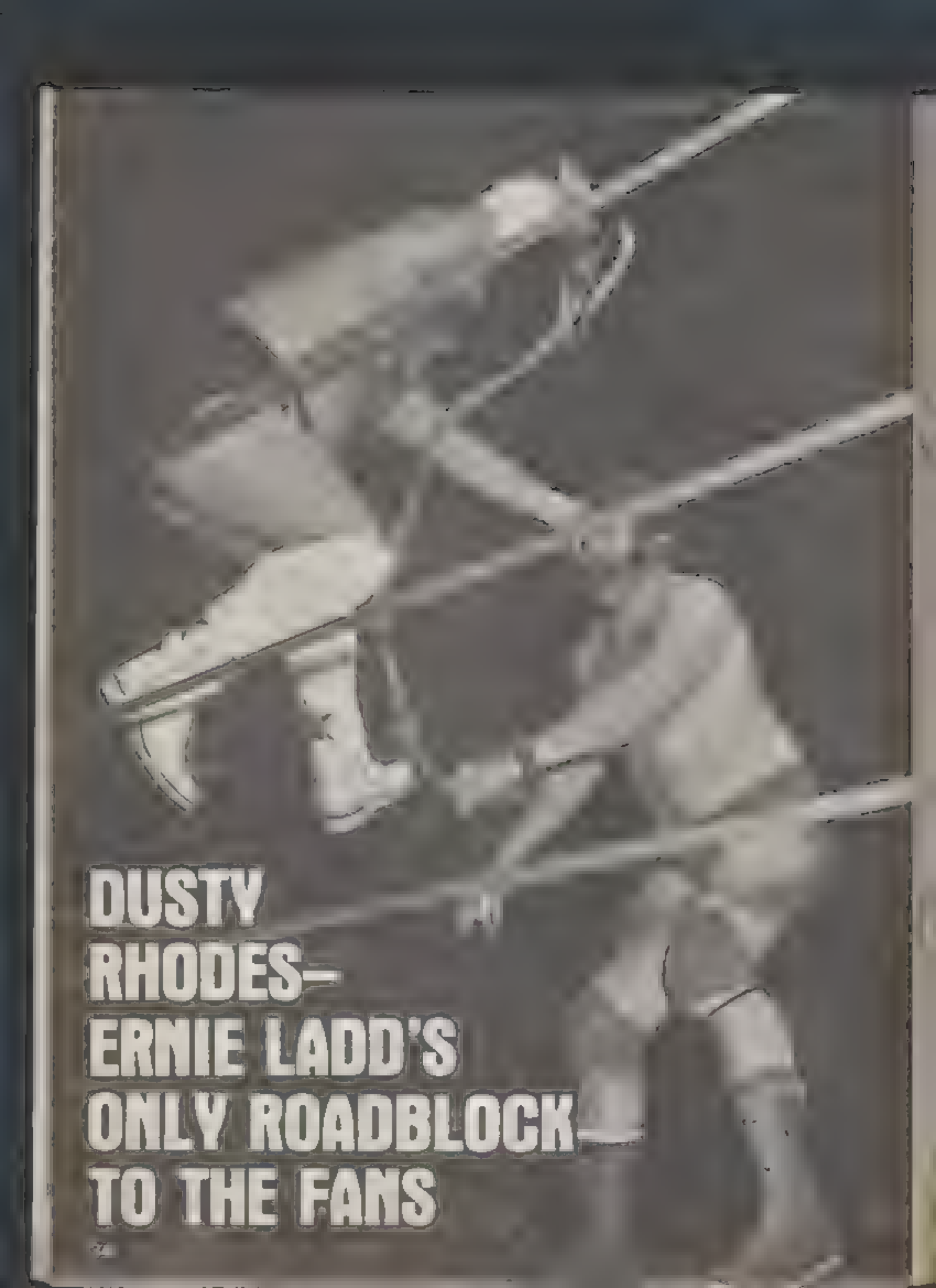
After you've seen Tiger Mask in action, two incredible facts come to mind.

Foremost is the man's speed. Tiger Mask is probably the world's quickest wrestler. Even if he were not so proficient at the gymnastic and aerial aspects of wrestling, Tiger Mask would be remarkable, simply because of his dazzling speed. He is barely 200 pounds, remember, and this enables him to utilize motion to the fullest.

Second, we must remember that Tiger Mask is hardly more than a rookie wrestler. *Mil Mascaras*, by comparison, has had over a decade to hone his skills and develop his style. Add 10 years of experience to the already considerable skills of Tiger Mask and you can see that this is a wrestler to keep an eye on through the '80s.

Unfortunately for American wrestling fans, Tiger Mask prefers to wrestle in his native Japan. He does, however, make an occasional tour of the United States. Should he appear in your part of the country, be sure not to miss him. And don't blink. □





**DUSTY  
RHODES—  
ERNIE LADD'S  
ONLY ROADBLOCK  
TO THE FANS**



Ernie Ladd will forever live with the dislike of wrestling fans if Dusty Rhodes has anything to say about it—or so Ladd claims. In a revealing interview, Ladd tells the behind the scenes story of the conflict between himself, Dusty Rhodes, and the fans

**D**ID YOU EVER try to walk up a down staircase? You have to choose your strategy carefully. You could either stick to the side, using the banister to pull yourself past the crowd descending the steps, or you can bury your head in your chest and brave the opposition up the middle.

Ernie Ladd has faced this dilemma throughout his career. Ladd is not one to cower on the sidelines. The former football star is used to burying his way through crowds to get where he wants to go. For Ladd, the top of the staircase represents the acceptance of wrestling fans, and many times he has reached the pinnacle only to find one thing in his way. That seemingly immovable obstacle is Dusty

Rhodes.

"He's like a bad penny, man that keeps turning up at the wrong time," Ladd said. "He says he doesn't come after me, but it's getting ridiculous. The man can't write it off as a coincidence anymore. I don't even have to look over my shoulder anymore 'cause I know he's there."

One might think Ladd was letting paranoia get the best of him, but a look at the two wrestlers' careers will prove his point. If Ladd is wrestling in one part of the country, you can be sure Rhodes is not far behind.

Rhodes is America's little darling," Ladd said, shrugging his broad shoulders. "He talks real slick, and the fans eat that up. And he knows just what to say to get me riled up. I can't

help myself but to react. And when I react, I get violent!

"The fans always side with him," Ladd continued. "I can't understand why. He can't wrestle. All he does is strut around the ring with his rear end sticking out. He prances around like he was the blue-ribbon hog at the state fair. If I liked him at all I'd be embarrassed for him."

Ladd did like Rhodes at one time. In fact, they were tag team partners. "We were good," he said. "We were headed for the top, but that pig wanted more. He wanted to stand alone in the spotlight. We would do TV interviews and he would not let me get a word in edgewise—not a single word. Everywhere I looked I saw Dusty Rhodes bumper stickers, 'Big Dust' T-



These two men, Ladd feels, will never see





The Cat holds Rhodes to the canvas by his hair and will begin a series of kicks to Dusty's already bleeding head (left). Ladd is staggered by an elbow to the temple (bottom left). Ernie is certain Rhodes will follow him to Georgia.

shirts, 'Dusty's Army' cards, Dusty keychains, Dusty buttons. It got me sick.

"It was a whole different story in the ring. He'd be doing his usual nothing in the ring and he'd scream from the other side of the ring, 'Ernie, I can't handle it man. Come bail me out, man.' He'd tag me and I'd get the job done, like always. And the fans would scream for Rhodes. Can you believe it? Rhodes would do his little dance around the ring and the world would forget I was alive.

"Then he got the title shots, he got the recognition, he manipulated the fans. He had them eating out of his hand. That's all he's good for, talk. He has the press wrapped around his little finger. I'm surprised any reporter is even bothering to talk to me."

Ladd paused a moment to gather his thoughts and continued, "I'm not great at talking to reporters. I can't give you big words or anything, all I can tell you is what happened. You take it from there. Most of us Texans are simple people, we say what's on our minds, except that Goodyear Bump Rhodes. I don't know how he got to be the way he is. He can talk through two sunrises without having to catch a breath. If he could wrestle as well as he talks, he'd be world champion forever."

Ladd is currently in the Georgia area, where he is serving more in an advisory capacity than as a wrestler. He has taken an interest in Butch Reed's career, though he denies that his

*(Continued on page 48.)*





# Dory Funk Jr. Learns . . . **TOO MUCH SUGAR IS BAD FOR HIS HEALTH**

**A**N ENERGY-CONSCIOUS fan sitting at ringside was overheard to say, "I wish I could harness all this heat and bring it home with me."

The heat he was talking about was created by friction, and the friction was being produced by the two combatants in the ring: Sweet Brown Sugar and former NWA titleholder Dory Funk Jr. Having engaged in battle after battle during many already hot Florida nights, the feud has moved north, adding some warmth to the cool evenings in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Regardless of where the matches take place, however, the Sweet Brown Sugar-Dory Funk Jr. wars follow a similar pattern: Sugar begins the matches wrestling by the rules and Funk drags him into a brawl. The whole thing has left a bitter taste in Sugar's mouth.

"I always thought of him as a fine scientific wrestler," Sugar said before the latest of their bouts. "Even before I became a wrestler, I used to read about Funk's title defenses. I never expected to be in a streetfight with him. I've lost a lot of respect for him."

"I guess I idolized him a bit too much. I also have to remember he's a lot older now than he was when he was the champ. He probably has to resort to those tactics just to stay in a match. Tonight, I'll have to keep my distance. I'll have to move fast. I know he can't keep up with me in the speed department."





The feud between Dory Funk Jr. and Sweet Brown Sugar began in the heat and humidity of the Florida mat wars. The two engaged in heated battle after battle without a decisive victory. A few months ago, Sugar moved to the Mid-Atlantic. Now, Funk has followed him. The war continues



"Old?" Funk bellowed. "He's got to be kidding me. These kids have no idea of what wrestling is about, absolutely no clue. You go into that ring to win. You do what it takes. He can dance around the ring all he wants. It just proves he's afraid of me. All of his little ballet moves won't help him tonight."

I can understand why he talks like that. He has no experience. He's still living in a fantasy world in the ring. Experience is what will beat him tonight.

The arena crackled with excitement before the match. The crowd's hushed comments grew into cheers and applause as Sweet Brown Sugar came down

the aisle. He vaulted into the ring over the top rope, to the fans' delight.

The sight of Funk entering the squared circle drew various boos and catcalls from the audience. One fan with an especially piercing voice screamed, "You're washed up, Dory, go home and stay there." Funk stared into the crowd looking for the fan to no avail. The look on his face told the whole story of what was to follow. Dory Funk was a frustrated man.

Sugar danced like Sugar Ray Leonard, picking and choosing his points of attack. He flustered Funk with a series of armdrags and hip tosses, and then took to the air. Sugar dazzled the crowd—and his opponent—with high flying headscissors and sizzling dropkicks. Funk tried to gain control, but Sugar managed to reverse every hold Funk attempted.

Then Sugar made his big mistake. He whipped Funk into the ropes and readied himself to deliver a flying dropkick, but Funk held onto the ropes and watched Sugar drop to the canvas. It was time for Funk to get out his frustrations. He moved in with a brutality that made some fans gasp in disbelief. Rocking him with closed-fists punches and stomping his head into the canvas, Funk had Sugar in his control.

But Funk wasn't satisfied. He probably could have pinned

*Continued on page 64,*



# IS BRUNO SAMMARTINO SACRIFICING HIS SON ON THE ALTAR OF HATRED?

**W**RESTLING FANS IN Detroit screamed with excitement as Bruno Sammartino Jr. delivered a powerful elbowsmash to the chest of Larry Zbyszko. Only momentarily stunned, Zbyszko quickly caught his breath and began to launch a brutal counterattack.

After ducking away from a dropkick, Zbyszko applied an excruciatingly torturous armwrest. As Bruno Jr. cried out in agony, a smile of pure pleasure crossed Zbyszko's face.

"How do you like that, you little wimp?" screamed Zbyszko with glee. "I hope your old man felt that all the way back in Pittsburgh!"

Zbyszko released Bruno Jr. and took a few steps back. In a split second, he lunged at Sammartino in an attempt to set him up for the backbreaker, but Bruno Jr. was too swift.

Bruno Sammartino Sr. was a superb wrestler and a fine teacher, and he passed his wrestling skills onto Larry Zbyszko several years ago. Sammartino may have taught Zbyszko everything he knows about wrestling, including how to use the backbreaker, but he also taught Bruno Sammartino Jr. well. No son of Bruno Sammartino, the Living Legend, is about to allow himself to be caught in a Sammartino-type backbreaker. For Zbyszko to even attempt the maneuver was sheer folly at best.

But Zbyszko, still maintaining an initiative, continued to attack his opponent with relentless fury. Bruno Jr. was too weakened at this



PHOTOS BY BRAD McFARLIN



point to retaliate. At last, he was able to do what he had been talking about with fatigue.

Although few fans in the Cobo Hall wanted to admit it to themselves, Bruno Sammartino Jr. was taking a terrible beating. Again Zbyszko attempted to use the backbreaker, and this time he was almost successful. Only a last-second counter prevented its application. Though the match was ruled a draw after the 20-minute time limit expired, Zbyszko was very satisfied with his evening's work.

The above match description, with some variation, is applicable to arenas all across the country. For the last few months, Larry Zbyszko has been hounding Bruno Sammartino Jr., hoping that sooner or later he will be able to run the young wrestler out of the sport in the same way he believes he ran the elder Sammartino out of wrestling and into retirement.

"It was all because of me that Bruno ran scared from the ring and retreated into the safety and laziness of retirement," Zbyszko boasted. "My goal is to do the same

**Bruno Sammartino Jr. has not had an easy introduction into the world of professional wrestling. Besides being the son of the Living Legend, he has stepped into one of the most bitter feuds in the history of the sport. Detroit fans saw blood spill as Bruno Jr. tried to avenge his father against Larry Zbyszko**

thing to his stupid son, to run this little wimp into the ground, to chase him from arena to arena across the country, and to eventually run the little snot out of wrestling once and for all.



Bruno Sammartino Jr. (opposite page) is suffering in the aftermath of the horrible feud of more than two years ago involving his father and Larry Zbyszko. Above: Bruno Jr. slams Zbyszko's head into a ringside table during their match in Detroit's Cobo Hall (below).







Bruno Jr. missed winning with a sunset flip by one step of the referee's hand (above). Zbyszko appears to be very pleased as his abdominal stretch causes Sammartino great pain (right)

"Wrestling is a sport for real men, not for little boys like Bruno Jr.," Zbyszko continued. "He reminds me so much of his old man, it makes me want to vomit. They're both a couple of stupid spaghetti-benders."

As the feud between Larry Zbyszko and Bruno Sammartino Jr. continues to heat up, one has to wonder why Bruno Sammartino himself hasn't taken a more positive form of action against his former pupil.

Yes, Bruno Sammartino was once the trusted and respected mentor of Larry Zbyszko, but a falling out between the two

wrestlers led to an extremely bitter split between Zbyszko and the Sammartinos.

Zbyszko's hatred seems to know no bounds. He feuded for years against the elder Sammartino, and has offered to wrestle him in a "loser leave country" match should the two-time former WWF champion ever decide to come out of retirement.

Zbyszko is campaigning against the younger Sammartino with a fury and determination that towers high above his disgust for Bruno Sr. Though Bruno Jr. is a highly competent wrestler who learned a great deal from his father and on

his own, he is far less experienced than the veteran Zbyszko.

The question that continues to gnaw at the soul of every wrestling fan who has ever thrilled to the skills of Bruno Sammartino is: How much longer can Bruno sit back and allow his son to continue a war that he was partially responsible for starting?

"I resent the insinuation that I sent my son into battle," said the elder Sammartino. "Bruno is just as angry with Zbyszko as I am. He used to look upon Larry as his big brother. When that creep turned against me, he turned against Bruno Jr., too. When the feud started in 1979, Bruno hadn't turned professional yet. By the time he turned pro, I had already retired. And believe me, that had nothing to do with Larry Zbyszko."



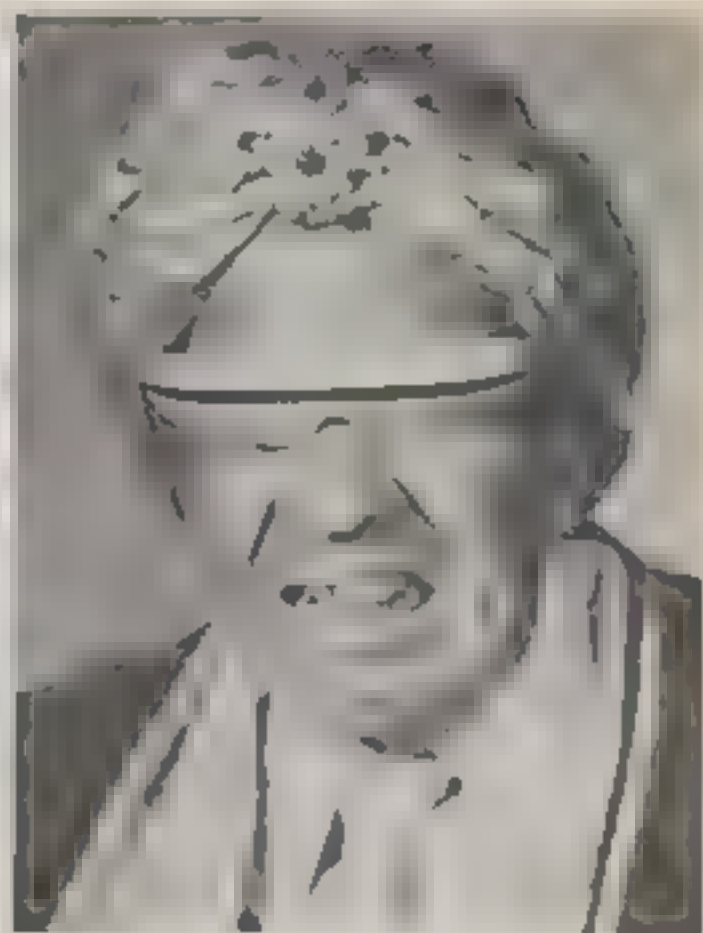
No, Bruno Jr. is not fighting my battle, he's fighting his own battle."

As Bruno Sammartino continues to sit back and let Bruno Jr. carry the burden of the feud, one has to wonder if he is expecting too much from his son. Indeed, one has to wonder if he has contemplated coming out of retirement.

"I don't like to see my son get hurt," he said. "But he's a man now and he has to make his own decisions. As far as my retirement is concerned, once I make a decision, I stick to it." □



# Grand Wizard's Open Letter To THE WRESTLER: "YOUR LIES MUST STOP!"



It is a rare occasion when we find a letter in our mailbox from the person about whom a story was written.

Attached to the following typewritten letter was a handwritten note that read: "I don't necessarily expect you to follow accepted journalistic ethics and print this response to your pathetic pack of lies, but I feel I must make my views known to your irresponsible staff." It was signed by The Grand Wizard.

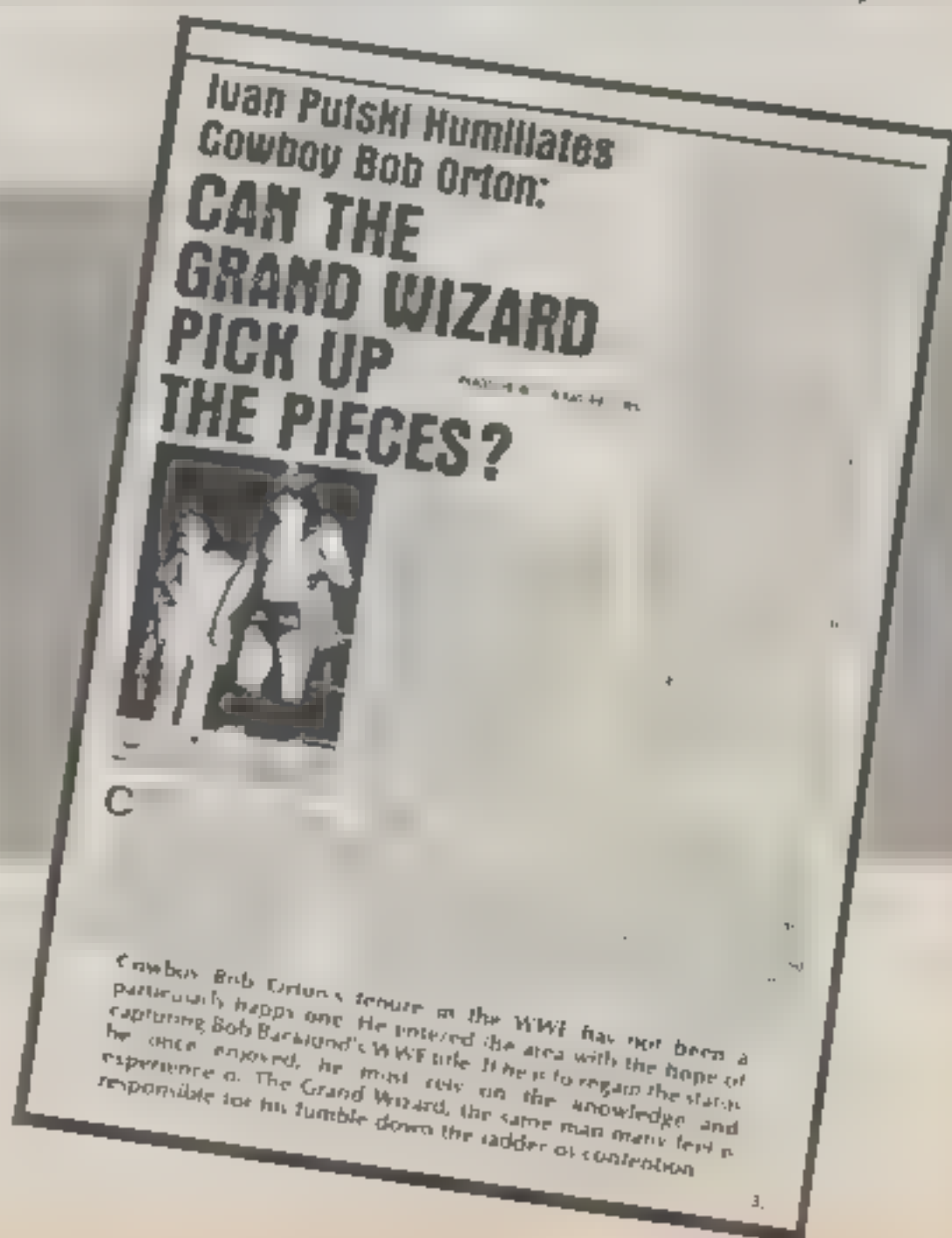
Contrary to the Wizard's expectations, we have decided to print this letter to "The Wrestler" as well as additional photos from the match in question—Cowboy Bob Orton vs. Ivan Putski. We feel it is important for wrestling fans to have access to all sides of an issue and "The Wrestler" is dedicated to presenting these different points of view.

Gentlemen (?)

With regard to your January 1983 issue of *The Wrestler*, I am forced for the first time in my life to write a letter to your magazine.

Starting out the new year with such a piece of scurrilous garbage

The flamboyant and always controversial Grand Wizard had some choice words to say concerning a story in the January issue of *The Wrestler*. As is our duty to present conflicting viewpoints, we present The Wizard's opinion







The Grand Wizard, posing with Cowboy Bob Orton (above), was extremely upset about "The Wrestler's" coverage of the match between Orton and Ivan Putski in our January 1983 issue. Even though Orton lost the match, The Wizard was outraged that we did not print photos of his wrestler in control. We run the accompanying photos for his benefit

wrapped in lies disgusts me. I am referring, of course, to the malicious propaganda entitled "Ivan Putski, Humiliates Cowboy Bob Orton" Can The Grand Wizard Pick Up The Pieces?

Isn't it amazing that neither Bob Orton nor myself was contacted about this story? Or should I call it a "story"? Perhaps "fairy tale" would be more accurate, or "wishful thinking" by the gutless moron who made all this up and then didn't have the guts to place a byline on the story. I called The Cowboy and read this B.S. to him over the phone, and I can assure you that he is one mad cowboy!

I am sure that this particular story will never be nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, but why you



didn't have the decency or courtesy to call me before writing this piece of trash. I don't know. I am positive you have my phone number. To not call me about this matter is reprehensible, plain and simple

The muscular Polish Pygmy who answers to the name of Ivan Putski has never seen the day that

he can defeat Bob Orton legally or without his own "personal" referee

In my estimation, I, The Grand Wizard, the Manager of Champions, backed by 27 years of experience in professional wrestling, can tell you flatly and without the slightest doubt that **COWBOY BOB ORTON WILL BE THE WWF CHAMPION!**



Personally and professionally, I have nothing but the highest regard and respect for, as well as 110 percent belief in, Orton's ability and integrity.

Speaking of integrity, that is obviously a quality unknown to the propagandist "photographer" Craig Peters, who certainly made sure that Putski looked great in all the pictures. Of course you showed no photos at all of Orton beating the hell out of that Pygmy. I remember that night and that match very well and I know that many shots of Cowboy Bob Orton

were available to you, but you instead chose to glorify the two-egged Polish joke.

Let me conclude this epistle by saying that both Cowboy Bob Orton and I have been lied about. You have committed libel, you have damaged both of our characters, and you have destroyed our images in the eyes of wrestling fans worldwide. Your lies must stop! Were it not for my great personal respect for the gentleman who is President and Publisher of *The Wrestler*, Mr. Stanley Weston, this matter would

be in the hands of my lawyers. I am certain, however, that in some foul, devious way, this entire matter was slipped into the magazine without the knowledge of Mr. Weston. It is, however, the person or persons who concocted this batch of lies whom both Orton and I would like to have superplexed from the top rope.

Thank you all for starting off Orton's and my new year with the stench of yellow journalism. I am so disgusted and disgruntled.

The Grand Wizard  
New York City. □



# Beyond the Squared Circle



Paul Jones shows off the robe he received from NWA champion Ric Flair as a Christmas gift.



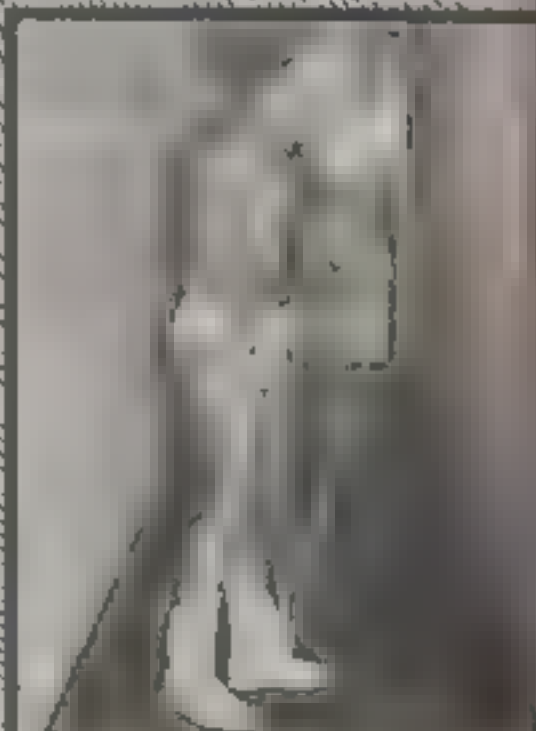
Ric Flair and Kangaroos Don Kent and A Costello discuss business. Flair is reportedly considering a tour of Australia.



Hulk Hogan playfully wraps his massive hands around the neck of Managing Editor Stu Saks. "I don't think I'd like to get him mad," Saks said when he could talk again.



This lucky fan gets his copy of 'Ins de Wrestling' signed by S.D. Jones and WWF champion Bob Backlund. Jones and Backlund give so much of their time to the fans away from the ring.



Steve Regal loosens up with a stretch rope in the corridor of an Omaha, Nebraska, arena.





Pierre Martell relaxes with a cigarette and some music before a defense of his WWC North American title in Puerto Rico



Charlie Cook, who has a scrapbook full of autographs he's keeping for his future grandson, adds the name Jerry Brisco



Ray 'The Crippler' Stevens bows-draws his hair before leaving the arena for a night on the town



Rocky Johnson, who once had aspirations of becoming a champion prizefighter, still uses the heavybag as a part of his training regimen



Eddie Gilbert (sporting a nasty black eye) and Jimmy Snuka pose in their favorite T-shirts



Mr. Saio discusses the use of the samurai sword with a martial arts instructor. Saio has a full knowledge of the martial arts but usually prefers to utilize his wrestling skills in the ring.

## DUSTY RHODES—ERNIE LADD

(Continued from Page 36)

intent is to win fans over. "I know what people are saying," Ladd said, "but I'm past the point of trying to play up to anyone. If the fans accept me fine, if not ... well, man, life goes on. As far as

Butch Reed is concerned, I like the way the kid looks in the ring. He's strong, he knows how to move, and most of all, he's got heart. He can be down and out and still come back

I can learn a lot from Ernie," Reed said. "He's been around for a long time, he's seen it all. He told me I reminded him of himself when he started. And before you ask, let me just say that I'd trust him with my life."

But would Reed side with Ladd if Rhodes came to Georgia to challenge him? "I don't want to get involved in anything like that," he replied. "Sure, Ladd will be coaching me, but Dusty's a friend. I hope I can keep it that way. I don't think Ernie wants to get into it again."

Will Rhodes follow Ladd into the Georgia area? "What do you mean will he?" Ladd said. "You should be asking when will Rhodes be here, it might be tomorrow, or next week, or next month, but he'll be here. It's just a matter of time."

Ladd's booming voice turned soft, and one could hear a twinge of frustration as he said, "I don't understand what the man's thinking. Even when we worked together I didn't understand him half the time. It's like he says to himself, 'I have to prove something, why don't I go after Ladd again.' Well, I don't have to prove anything. I'm not the chaser, I'm the one being chased. I want to get on with my career. Working with Butch Reed is a whole new thing for me. Maybe it will lead to managing him and other wrestlers. I don't know yet. I do know that I won't get anything accomplished if I have to worry about Rhodes following me around the world. He might be the fans' 'American Dream,' but to me he's just one big 'American Nightmare.'"

Rhodes couldn't be reached for comment. He was on the road. □



Ladd jabs his bandaged thumb into The American Dream's exposed throat. Ladd has been a hated man throughout most of his career but says he wants to change his image. The presence of Rhodes, he claims, makes that wish impossible.



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## WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from Page 10)

heavyweight boxer Earnie Shavers as a referee for "problem" matches, such as the upcoming Jos Leduc-Abdullah the Butcher bout. "We are confident Earnie can restore order once things get out of hand," an area official said.



There is a large controversy over the facts surrounding the parting of J.J. Dillon (above) and Ernie "Big Cat" Ladd.

Ernie Ladd and former manager James J. Dillon are now bickering about the details of their recent split. Ladd says, "I tore up my contract when I learned that Dillon was conspiring within his own ranks to have me rubbed out. Why I don't know. But I wasn't going to hang around long enough to find out. I quit; he did not fire me."

Dillon counters, "Ladd was worthless slime. He couldn't follow orders and was thus of no benefit to my Royal Family. So I fired him. After I fired him, he hung around my office for hours asking if I would consider reversing my decision. I told him 'No, just pack your bags and leave.' He still couldn't follow orders. Finally, I had to call in Angelo Mosca and Jim Garvin to convince him it was all over. He left, but I am sure I have not

heard the last of him. If he wants me, or any of my men, he knows where to find us."

Mr. Saito has left the WWF area and is wrestling in Japan. His tag team partner, Mr. Fuji, has decided to remain with manager Lou Albano and concentrate on singles matches. Terry Funk writes from Japan: "I have successfully defended my NWA title on five occasions here. The fans have all responded well to my championship claim, and I expect the same reaction when I return to the U.S.A." As you know, Funk had a replica of the NWA belt made and is claiming he, not Ric Flair, is the rightful NWA ruler. . . . Yes, that was Abdullah the Butcher in the martial arts film *Roaring Fire*. Producers of the film tell us the man was almost impossible to handle during filming, and he injured six extras who were cast in fight scenes with him.

Hulk Hogan is back from South Africa and is once again campaigning for a title match against AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel. . . . Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood have signed for a rematch against NWA tag team champions Sgt. Slaughter and Don Kernodle. The popular duo won by disqualification in their first title try. Title belts as most of you I am sure are aware cannot change hands unless the champions are pinned or submit.

Gary Hart is trying to get The Magic Dragon booked for a series of matches in Georgia.

Eddie Gilbert is thrilled over the prospect of being managed by Arnold Skoaland. Skoaland has teamed with WWF champion Bob Backlund and is coaching the youngster for future matches against junior heavyweight champion Tiger Mask.

And that's what's happening. See you at the matches! □

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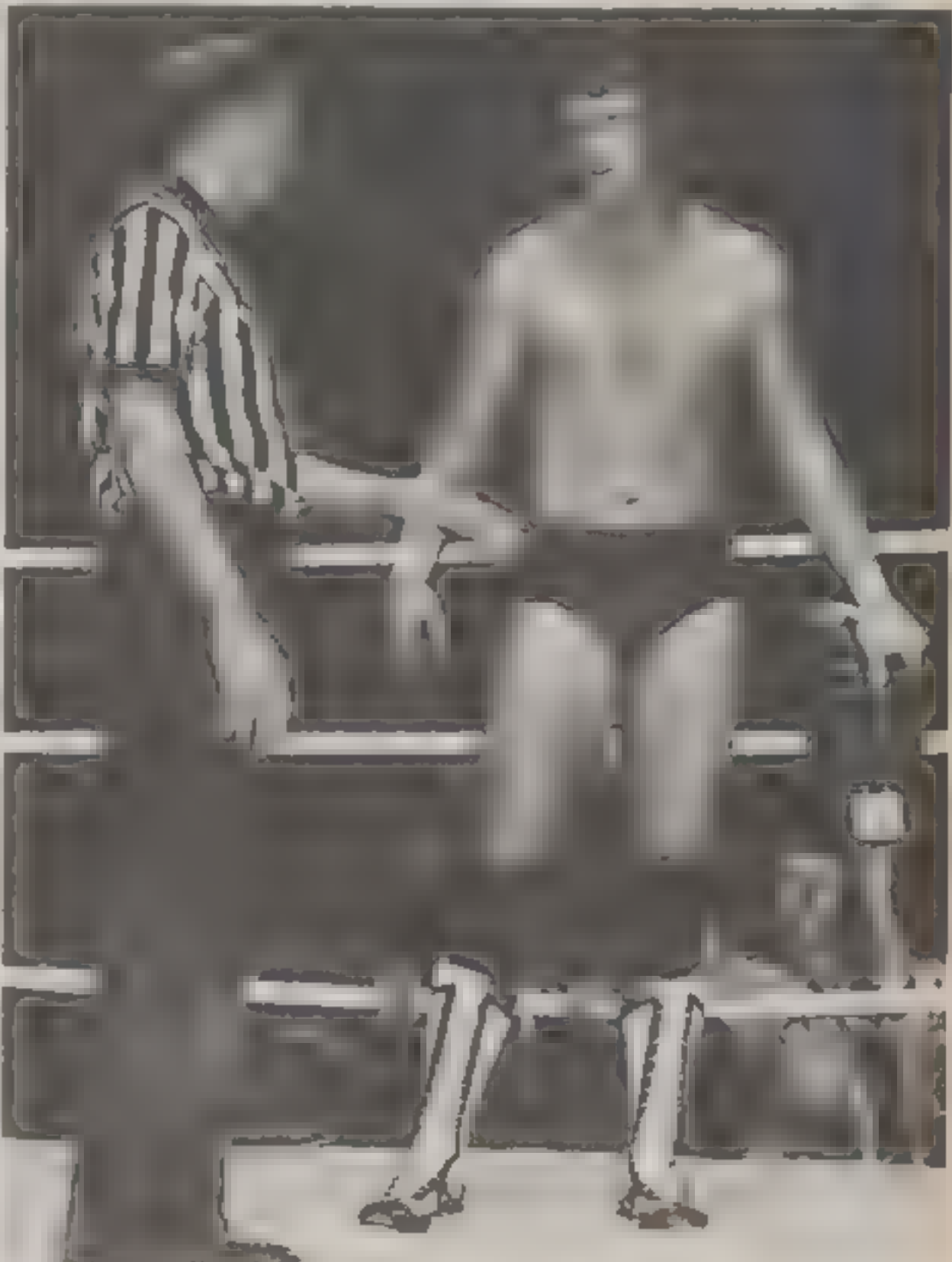
(Continued from Page 12)

both men taking a lot of punishment. Von Erich was able to apply the headclaw twice and tried to get Flair to submit to the sleeperhold. Flair attempted to apply the figure-four leglock only to have Von Erich reverse it. The two went wild with the champ pushing the referee around and Von Erich bringing a chair into the ring. In his rage, Von Erich threw the ref over the top rope and was disqualified.

In other bouts: The Freebirds defeated King Kong Bundy and

Bill Irwin . . . Bugsy McGraw beat  
The Magic Dragon . . . Frank  
Dusek lost to Al Madrid

**GREEN BAY, WI—Correspondent: Gregory Zajac**—The Brown County Arena was the sight of Nick Bockwinkel's classic AWA title defense against the sensational Rick Martel. Early in the bout Bockwinkel attacked the leg Martel had already injured in a match against Crusher Blackwell. Martel soon reversed the situation, however, ramming the champ's leg



David Von Erich is reluctant to hand the NWA belt back to the referee after his disqualification loss to champion Ric Flair. The referee, who called for the belt after being thrown out of the ring by Von Erich, was unharmed.



into the steel ringpost several times. In the end, both grapplers tumbled to the floor of the arena and were counted out by the referee.

In other bouts: Baron Von Raschke beat Bobby Heenan. Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell defeated Ken Patera and Bobby Duncum.

**COLUMBUS, OH—Correspondent: Gary Graham**—The intensity was in the air when Tommy "Wildfire" Rich met his archrival Buzz Sawyer in a Steel Cage Match. Rich went on the attack the second Sawyer got in the cage, and, within one minute,



Before Tommy Rich can leave the cage after defeating Buzz Sawyer, he spots Super Destroyer charging from the dressing room. Tommy was brutally double-teamed and had to be removed on a stretcher.

Sawyer's face was a bloody mask. After Rich missed a dropkick, Sawyer took over, punching and slamming Rich all over the ring. Rich survived a suplex and took control again. Wildfire ended the bout with a vertical bodyblock. After the pin, Super Destroyer entered the cage and he and Sawyer bloodied Rich so badly that he had to be carried out of the arena on a stretcher.

In other matches, Ivan Koloff beat Paul Orndorff. Super Destroyer got disqualified against Johnny Rich. Hussein "Iron Sheik" Arab beat Tom Pritchard. □

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## YOU ASKED US

(Continued from Page 14)

very soon. It doesn't matter, though, because I can defeat that greasy sleazeball Morales with or without the spike!"

\*\*\*

Q: "I would like to know if Brad Armstrong and Tito Santana plan on being permanent tag team partners. I think they both have great talent and determination." Shelly Zuber, Muskegon, MI

A: Although Brad Armstrong and Tito Santana have been wrestling together as a tag team on and off for several months, the two have no permanent plans. "Tito is a great partner," says Brad, "but I have a lot of things I'm doing right now, and I don't want to confine myself to just tag team wrestling."

\*\*\*

Q: "I would like to ask Nick Bockwinkel what it felt like to win the AWA title back from Otto Wanz."—Ed Batey, Minneapolis

A: "It felt great, Ed," replies Bockwinkel. "It was like the whole world was mine. I knew at one moment that not only was I the champion again, but that I would prevent Otto Wanz from bringing the AWA title back to Austria, which made me happy, because I love the fans so much."

\*\*\*

Q: "My question is directed to Ric Flair. I think you are a great champion. The greatest. As I see it, there is no competition for you to defend your NWA title against, which brings about my question: What do you think of the competition in the Mid-



Nick Bockwinkel receives congratulations from deposed AWA champion Otto Wanz. Also pictured (from left to right) are Bockwinkel's manager Bobby Heenan, AWA President Stanley Blackburn, and referee Leo Nomellini.



Atlantic area? Also, is there any one wrestler you fear most?"—Connie Whitmore, Jacksonville, NC

A. "I don't think that there is much competition at all in the M.d-Atlantic, as far as my title is concerned," says Flair. "I've defended my belt against every top wrestler in every area of the country, and they all failed to even come close to taking the championship away from me. Which brings me to your next question, Connie, and the answer to that is, no, I'm not afraid of anyone." □

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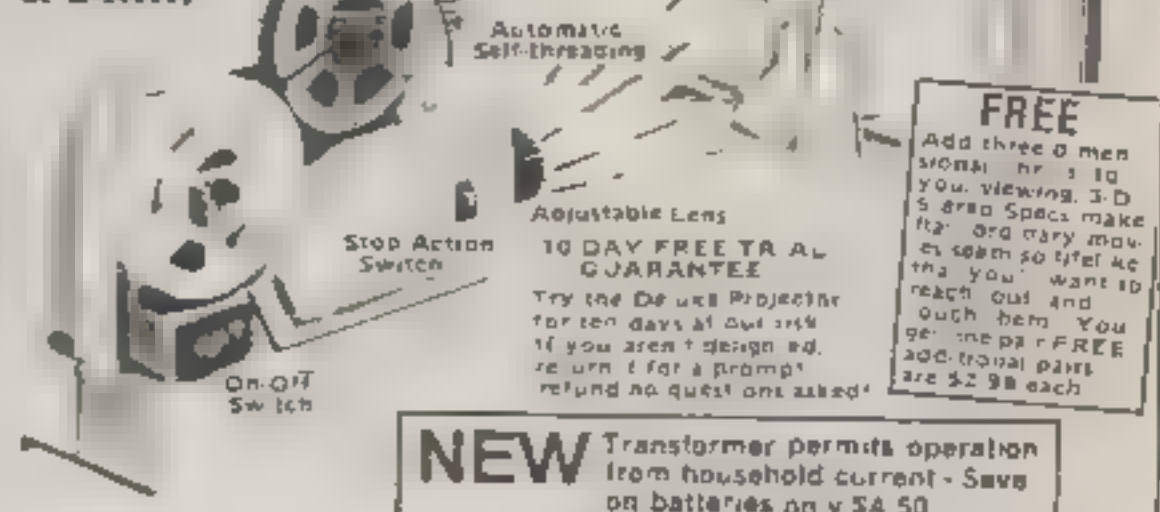
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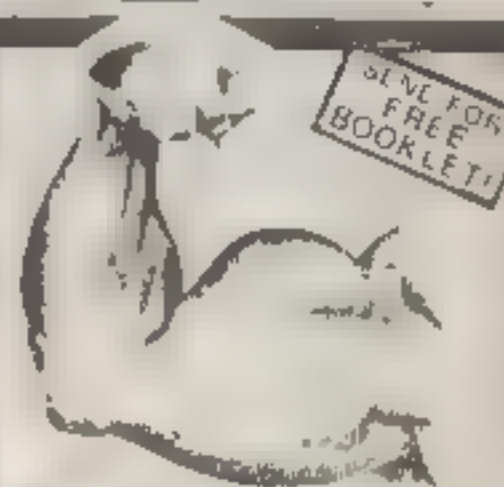
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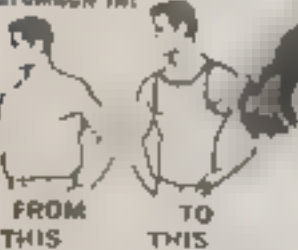
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## THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

(Continued from Page 18)



**THUMBS UP** to Roddy Piper. Although Piper has left the Georgia area and entered the Mid-Atlantic, he has maintained his desire to remain a fan favorite despite numerous big-money offers from rulebreakers in the area. It is good to see that Piper is sincere in his desire to disassociate himself with the rulebreaker faction in wrestling.

**THUMBS DOWN** to Jimmy Snuka. The Superfly has allowed his thirst for revenge to get the better of him. A master scientific wrestler who exhibits peerless skills in the ring, Snuka has lately been concentrating on new ways to bloody up the heads of Captain Lou Albano and Ray Stevens. Revenge may be sweet, but enough is enough.



**THUMBS UP** to Buggy McGraw. As part of the Texas area fan favorites who battle against the forces of H & H Ltd. (the managerial association of Gary Hart and Hussein Arab), Buggy McGraw has maintained one of the most positive attitudes of anyone in the Lone Star State. McGraw is a star of superior magnitude who deserves more recognition for his efforts.



**THUMBS DOWN** to Kevin Sullivan. This Florida rulebreaker has shocked and stunned the wrestling world by announcing his allegiance to Satan and reveling in his newfound beliefs in devil worship. Whether Sullivan actually believes in these doctrines is not the issue. The fact that such doctrines are brought into the wrestling ring at all is reprehensible.







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## Q&A

(Continued from Page 25)



A man of Studd's power can cause great damage with the application of very commonplace wrestling holds. Ron Bass and Dino Bravo are weakened by Studd's chinlock (above and below). Big John holds Paul Omdorff in a backbreaker with just his right arm (opposite right).



**Q:** Isn't this just an example of the frustration wrestlers feel about being unable to defeat Backlund?

**A:** Of course it's frustrating! We know we're better than he is. Instead of a real man being champion, we have this bozo. It's a disgrace! When I was in Florida, it was possible for a man to win a title. Here, you have to be Miss Goody Two Shoes. Freddie and I are going to teach him a lesson none of wrestling will ever forget.

**Q:** And what will that lesson be?

**A:** Well, if you haven't figured that out by now, you're more stupid than you look.

bother the press or the fans. We do the work and Backlund gets rich. He's stealing money out of my pocket!



Let's just say that Backlund's days are numbered, and that his championship reign will be over as soon as he is foolish enough to step into the ring with me.

**Q:** Forgive me if I don't place any bets on that match, but I've heard boasts like this before from many wrestlers.

**A:** That's okay. Many people may talk, but not too many men back up what they say with action. I'm a man of action, and Bob Backlund is going to learn that the hard way. I have the strength, I have the stamina, I have the willpower, and I have the best and most knowledge-



able manager in all of professional wrestling, Mr. Fred Blassie. Together we will dethrone Backlund and rule the WWF.

**Q:** I wish you luck, I think you'll need it.

**A:** I don't need luck, just my raw skill and talent. Backlund is the one who needs luck . . . but as of now, Backlund's luck has run out. ☐

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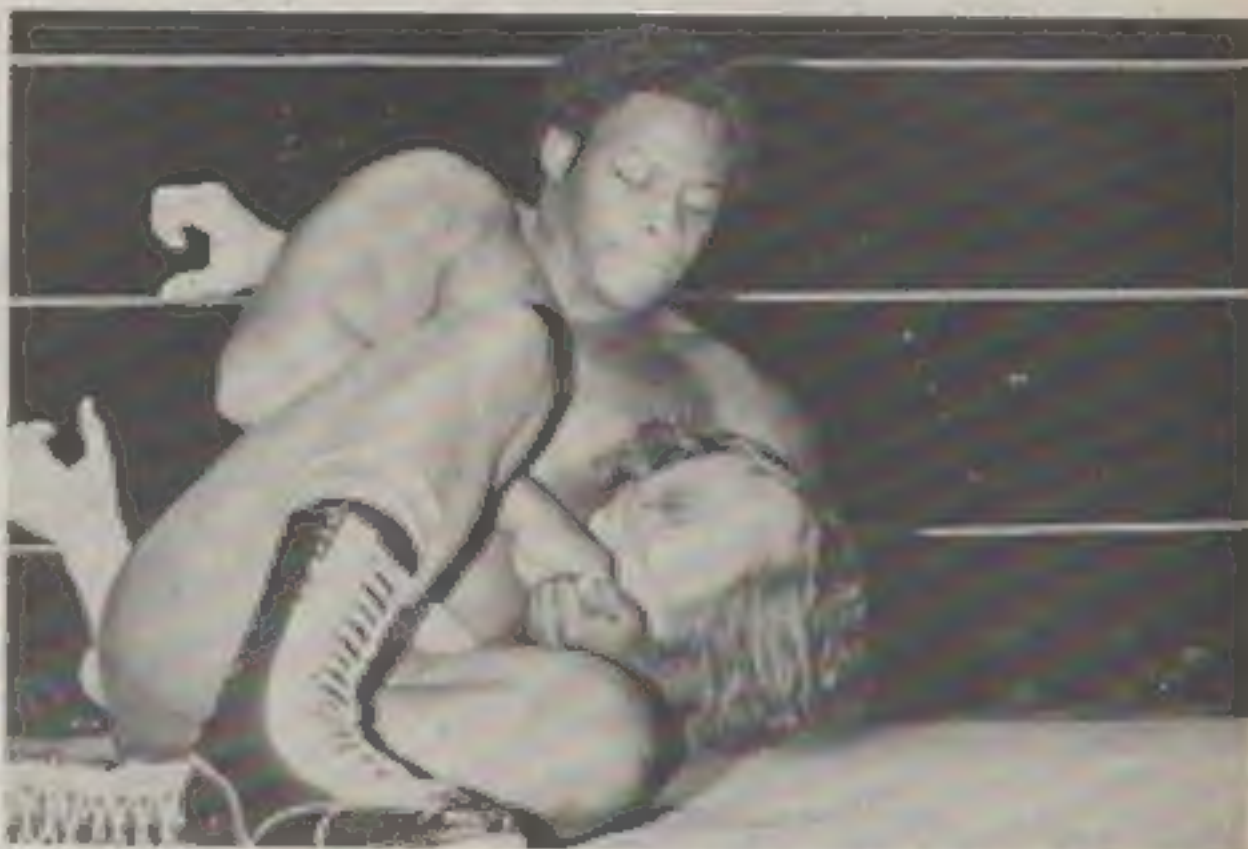
## SUGAR-FUNK

(Continued from Page 39)

Sugar at any time, but he wanted to do more. He repeatedly crashed Sugar's head into the turnbuckle. Then, Funk whipped Sugar into the far corner with so much force that Sugar flew over the ringpost and onto the concrete floor outside the ring. With a fiery rage, Funk followed him out of the ring and

continued his attack. The referee counted both men out and then jumped through the ropes to stop Funk's savage attack.

Funk laughed after the match. "He learned a lesson tonight, huh? I saw that dropkick coming a mile away. He left himself open, and I took advantage of it. That's experience, being able to



Sugar holds Funk in place with a powerful headlock (above). Funk brings Sugar to the canvas from the kneeling position with a snapmare (below). Referee Sonny Fargo backs Funk away from the brutally beaten Sugar (opposite right). The official verdict was a double-countout.







take advantage of your opponent's weaknesses. After that dropkick, he was all mine.

"I guess I'm a pretty good teacher. He'll remember this lesson for a while. The pain won't go away too quickly."

"He was smart tonight, smarter than I was," Sugar said. "I should've waited on the dropkick. I got a little carried away, I had too much momentum going."

"What happened after that was disgusting, and not only because I was on the receiving end. There's no reason for what he did to me. If that's what experience is, I don't want any part of it."

Sugar was in a great deal of pain as he put his gear away at the end of the night. He strained to pick his bag up off the floor, and straightened up slowly.

"I'll tell you one thing," he said, "I won't forget this. Sweet revenge is right up my alley." □

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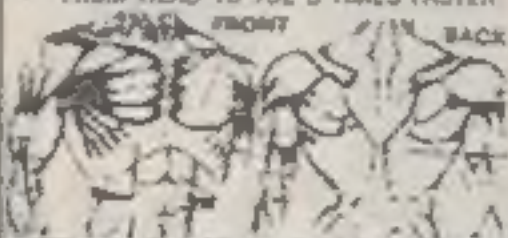
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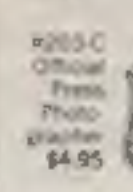
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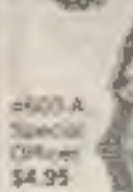


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